

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

8:30 pm ^{td}
INFORMATION

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

September 7, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: General Haig 
SUBJECT: Middle East Hijacking Status Report

Secretary Rogers has met with the Ambassadors of Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland. All have agreed to release prisoners they hold. These include: Switzerland, three Fedayeen; Federal Republic of Germany, three Fedayeen; United Kingdom, the girl hijacker captured yesterday.

through the Red Cross
State now hopes to announce/a concerted four power offer to the Fedayeen to the effect that the four powers will be willing to make this exchange if all prisoners and both aircraft are turned over to the International Red Cross. This varies from what the Fedayeen have demanded. The Fedayeen demand provides that only non Israeli nationals and non dual passport personnel will be released in return for the foregoing exchange. They would continue to hold Israeli prisoners and dual passport prisoners. (We believe there are ten U. S. personnel holding dual passports in this group.) These would only be released in return for all Fedayeen held by the Israelis.

If the Fedayeen holds to its original demand we could be placed in the untenable position of being isolated with Israel in negotiating the release of Israeli and dual-citizenship personnel. State will attempt to avoid this predicament through the proposal cited above. State has adopted this proposal because they feel that since the Swiss have already agreed to ransom their nationals and aircraft, it will be difficult if not impossible to hold them in line except by such an offer.

I believe if we do make this proposal it will likely be rejected. Then we will be faced with the same problem of holding the other three nations in line--a rather dim prospect. If we do not make this proposal we will probably lose the other powers and find ourselves isolated in either event. In going this route we should decide to remain firm in this position for as long as we can even if the other nations collapse. We are thus in effect buying time and providing a vehicle for the Red Cross to begin negotiating. In the past the Red Cross has been the only successful route for gaining the release of hijacked prisoners or other hostages.

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PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 22, 2004